

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Nov 27th 2013

The Writing on the Wall

“But the God in whose hand is your life breath and the whole course of your life, you did not glorify.”
(Daniel 5:23)

The king and his lords were triumphant. They had demolished kingdoms and taken their people captive. Drunk with power, they taunted their victims. Their minds clogged with empty pleasures, they could not read the writing on the wall.

Though he was young, Daniel had clear vision that was not for sale. With his friends, he endured exile with grace and simplicity; they did not trade the covenant for purple robes and golden collars. Freed by the presence of God, Daniel could see that corruption and stupidity will not endure.

Age does not guarantee that wisdom will follow. More years on earth may mean more clutter in the soul. We have seen plenty of things rise and fall. We have heard the calls for change before. Hope is for the young who dare to think big. We call our cynicism wise: there is nothing new in history.

Yet, seen more closely, this world is a surprising place. Pope Francis disrupts our complacency with his striking moves towards those at the margins. In many places, the cry for justice persists despite crushing obstacles in the way. The powerful stumble toward peace talks as a last resort. Like Daniel, people draw strength from what is more real and true than the fraud that surrounds them.

Young people have less cluttered souls. A society that does not listen to the young and draw strength from the exiles in its midst may, too, find its days are numbered.

Jeanne Schuler